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Strengthening of the coordination of humanitarian and disaster relief assistance of the United Nations, including special economic assistance: special economic assistance to individual countries or regions

Letter dated 29 March 2000 from Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of the Sudan to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

Upon instructions from my Government, I have the honour to transmit the attached note dated 27 February 2000 from Mustafa Osman Ismail, Minister of External Relations of the Sudan, addressed to you, on the flagrant violation by the Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA) of the Operation Lifeline Sudan (OLS) agreement, including the Rome Security Protocol of 1998, and the involvement of the World Food Programme plane in carrying armed personnel at Fanjak, Upper Nile State, and the subsequent unfortunate incident, which constitute the most recent evidence of the violations by the OLS Southern Sector of the rules and regulations governing the activities of OLS (see annex I).

Furthermore, I would also like to refer to the letter dated 7 February 2000 addressed to you by the Permanent Representative of the Sudan in this regard (see annex II).

I should be grateful if you would have the text of the present letter and its annexes circulated as an official document of the General Assembly.

(*Signed*) Mubarak **Rahmtalla**
Chargé d'affaires a.i.
Deputy Permanent Representative

00-37444 (E) 030400 030400

Annex I

Note dated 27 February 2000 from Mustafa Osman Ismail, Minister of External Relations of the Sudan, addressed to the Secretary-General

Since the initiation of the Operation Lifeline Sudan (OLS) programme, the Government of the Sudan has committed itself to extending every possible support to the humanitarian operations carried out by United Nations agencies and NGOs operating under OLS.

The Sudan's commitment to the objectives of OLS is clearly demonstrated by its respect to and abidance by the rules, agreements, protocols and conventions signed by the Sudan and the concerned parties, as well as its full support for the international humanitarian conventions.

Despite the Sudan's obvious commitment to OLS over the past several years, it is indeed regrettable to note a series of violations of basic OLS principles by both the Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA) and a number of OLS agencies.

It is a matter of record that SPLA has cold-bloodedly murdered several aid workers. In 1992, for example, SPLA murdered four aid workers near Pageri in the southern Sudan. A similar brutal act was committed in 1999, when four aid workers were abducted and killed by SPLA in flagrant violation of the Rome Security Protocol of 1998.

The recent involvement of a World Food Programme (WFP) plane in carrying armed personnel at Fanjak, Upper Nile State, and the subsequent unfortunate incident are the most recent evidence of the violations by the OLS Southern Sector of the rules and regulations governing the work of OLS.

I would like to take this opportunity to reaffirm our strict adherence to the Rome Security Protocol pertaining to the security and safety of humanitarian aid personnel and property, as well as the other agreements reached within the (TCHA) forum and the international humanitarian conventions and their principles.

While expressing its delight at the peaceful end of the ordeal of the WFP planes and hostages, the Government of Sudan urges the United Nations to conduct a swift investigation into the matter, and to review the procedures and regulations of OLS in order to avoid recurrence of such violations.

(*Signed*) Mustafa Osman **Ismail**
Minister of External Relations
Republic of the Sudan

Annex II

Letter dated 7 February 2000 from the Permanent Representative of the Sudan to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

Upon instructions from my Government, I have the honour to transmit to you the attached statement issued by the Commission of Humanitarian Assistance on 4 February 2000 on the detention by rebel militia at old Funjak, Upper Nile State, of an aircraft of the World Food Programme, Operation Lifeline Sudan (OLS) Southern Sector (see appendix).

The circumstances of this unfortunate incident, as detailed in the statement, namely the transportation of three militia commanders by the World Food Programme aircraft from one area to another, are still further evidence of the violation of OLS agreements by some partners to the Operation.

I would like to assure you that my Government will spare no efforts in bringing an urgent and safe ending to this incident. My Government is confident that the United Nations will take the necessary measures to address these violations of OLS agreements so as to prevent the recurrence of such incidents.

(*Signed*) Elfatih **Erwa**
Permanent Representative

Appendix

Statement issued on 4 February 2000 by the Commission of Humanitarian Assistance

On 28 January 2000 an aircraft of the World Health Programme, Southern Sector, transported three military militia leaders in the old Funjak district, Upper Nile State, to another district, Unity State, giving them falsely to believe that they were summoned by their immediate commander.

These three leaders were detained by the rebel militias in that district, which aroused the rancour of their forces at Funjak, who, on 3 February, seized another aircraft belonging to the World Food Programme and detained its four passengers, demanding the return of their abducted leaders.

The Commission of Humanitarian Assistance expresses its regret at this unforeseen crisis and states that it has begun efforts to put an end to it as soon as possible.

The Commission of Humanitarian Assistance stresses its position of principle, which is to support and facilitate the flow of humanitarian assistance to the needy in the southern States. It nevertheless believes in the necessity of compliance with the rules and procedures agreed on for the administration of Operation Lifeline Sudan by all partners.

The Commission will endeavour to review the management of Operation Lifeline Sudan in order to ensure that such incidents are not repeated, so that they do not have a negative impact on the flow of humanitarian assistance.